

Handwritten initials

30 September 1953

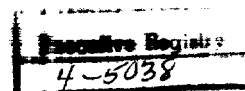
Memorandum for: The Director of Central Intelligence

**Subject: Joint Congressional Committee
on Central Intelligence**

1. Four resolutions have been introduced into the 83rd Congress calling for a Joint Congressional Committee on Intelligence. The first of these, S. Con. Res. 42, introduced by Senator Mansfield (D., Mont.), calls for a Joint Committee to make continuing studies of the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, of problems relating to the gathering of intelligence affecting the national security, and of its coordination and utilization by the various agencies of the Government. The second resolution, H. Con. Res. 167, was introduced by Congressman Patterson (R., Conn.), and is identical with Senator Mansfield's. The third resolution, H. Con. Res. 168, introduced by Mrs. Kelly (D., N.Y.), and the fourth, H. Con. Res. 169, introduced by Congressman Zablocki (D., Wis.), call for the establishment of a Joint Committee on Intelligence Matters. While the purpose of all four bills is the same, the latter two provide that the Central Intelligence Agency and related intelligence services, rather than CIA alone, shall keep the Joint Committee fully and currently informed with respect to their activities. All four bills provide for a committee of 18 members, divided equally between the Senate and House, with not more than 5 members from each body to be of the same political party. All bills and other matters in the Congress relating primarily to the Central Intelligence Agency (and related intelligence services) are to be referred to the Joint Committee, which shall from time to time report to the Congress on matters within its jurisdiction. The Joint Committee is authorized to hold hearings, to require the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents, with the power of subpoena. It is empowered to appoint experts, consultants, technicians and clerical assistants.

2. As a matter of historical interest, Congressman Devitt, of Minnesota, no longer a member of the Congress, introduced a similar bill in the 80th Congress establishing an 18-man joint

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24 August 1953


MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Congressional Committee on CIA

1. You will remember that the other day we were discussing the proposal for a joint Congressional Committee established to handle the Agency, its problems, and its performance. I thought you might be interested, therefore, in an unsolicited comment on this subject which I received from Tracy Barnes:

"The problem of a joint Congressional committee devoted to CIA has been troubling many of us for some time. We are of course not in a position to evaluate the political factors since we do not have the facts. Many of us however feel very strongly that if it is in any way avoidable, everything possible should be done to prevent its formation. The analogy to the AEC is of course inaccurate. Except for the fact that both agencies deal in highly classified information they are really not otherwise comparable. Moreover is it not true that there is at present a special Appropriations Committee which sits on CIA budgets. If so, why can't it cover substantially all the areas which are of legitimate interest to the Congress. Assuming that such a committee is not a foregone conclusion, might there not be some value in having the President appoint a special group who, like independent CPAs, could look into CIA operations and organization and report directly back to him. Such a committee could be bipartisan, composed of universally accepted private citizens plus perhaps some carefully selected Congressional leaders. In adopting such an approach, the President might be able to take the offensive away from Congress and might also be able to satisfy critics without exposing the Agency to the dangers of dealing with a Congressional committee. Assuming that the Presidentially appointed Committee is not a good idea, I wonder whether anyone in the Agency has the assignment at the moment to come up with other possible alternatives. If not it seems to me some one should have such assignment which presumably would fall in Larry Houston's office."

2. You may want to pass this on to the Acting Director for his consideration.


Richard Helms

Chief of Operations, DD/P

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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